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J. M. C. Opening addresses

# INTRODUCTORY LECTURE.

1846

BY

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PROFESSOR OF MIDWIFERY AND THE DISEASES OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN JEFFERSON MEDICAL COLLEGE.

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# CORRESPONDENCE.

PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER 15th, 1846.

*Dear Sir*,—At a meeting of the Class of the Jefferson Medical College, held on 12th inst., it was *resolved*, that a committee be appointed to request of Professor Meigs, a copy of his able and learned Introductory Lecture for publication. We sincerely hope sir, that the wishes of the Class will meet your approbation.

Your obedient servants,

T. A. ELIASON, D. C., President,
W. H. TINGLEY, Pa., Secretary,
N. R. BOUTELLE, Me.
G. W. WENTWORTH, N. H.
H. B. TAPPAN, Mass.
D. M. THATCHER, CONN.
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* J. WILLIAMS, TENN.
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A. L. GAMBLE, Iowa.
H. J TOOMBS, Florida.
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* J. B. ANDERSON, Texas.
J. REID, Canada West,
R. SUTHERLAND, Nova Scotia.
B. ADDISON, N. B.
J. F. NICHOLAS, England.
S. T. CROWLEY, Ireland.
J. DAWSON, Birmah, India.

To Professor C. D. Meigs.

PHILADELPHIA, NOVEMBER 21, 1846.

*Gentlemen*,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your communication, requesting as a committee of the Class of Jefferson Medical College, a copy of my late Introductory Lecture for publication. I beg you to thank the Class for me, for this kind mark of their approbation of my discourse, which I cheerfully place at your disposal. I am grateful for the obliging manner in which you have communicated the desire of the Class, and remain with the greatest respect your obedient servant,

CHARLES D. MEIGS.

To MR. T. A ELIASON,
W. H. TINGLEY,
N. R. BOUTELLE,
G. W. WENTWORTH,
and the other members of the committee.

* committee of correspondence

# INTRODUCTORY.

GENTLEMEN,—Notwithstanding my distinguished colleague, Dr. Dunglison, in his Lecture yesterday evening, made such very judicious observations on the present state of this College, I take the very earliest occasion to declare that the duty of commencing my annual course of lectures never has seemed to me so full of difficulty and heavy responsibility, as at the opening of *this* winter's sessions. For, I cannot forget, that the *Country*, has thus far honoured the Trustees and the Professors of this College, by confiding to them annually increasing numbers of its sons, for instruction in all the branches of medical learning, and by this sanction, and this approval of our past labours, has acquired a right to look to us with strong claims, that we should evince greater energy, warmer zeal, and more scrupulous exactness in the discharge of all our obligations to you and to the Country. I cannot forget that this is not our school—that it is one of the American Institutions for the improvement and diffusion of medical knowledge, and that it, in fact, belongs to the *Country*, by whose approbation it has risen and now stands; and by whose disapprobation, should that be deserved, it would sink back into oblivion and contempt.

This strong sense of our obligations to the country, is one of the considerations that give to the opening of the present session an importance greater than in any former years; and which, as for myself, certainly does fill me with a deep sense of my responsibility both to you and to the country which has sent you to this place. I feel that I ought to make greater exertions in your behalf than I have ever done, and that I ought to be more *successful* as a teacher of my branch of medical science and art than I have ever been. I feel that I owe this to the country.

After a man has passed the meridian of life, each revolving year brings him to a more serious contemplation of the duties that lie in the remainder of his way; and the smitings and the cries of conscience will not cease in *his* bosom, who, when he comes up to the point of those duties, dares to pass by on the other side, and avoid their fulfilment. A man has left too many such undone while young, and impetuous, and hurried with the hopes, and intentions, and delusions of life's early career, to feel able to look upon those that remain to be performed, with indifference or total disregard. He has not time left for indifference.

I see before me here a great number of gentlemen destined to listen, during the whole of the present course of Lectures, while I relate to them all the particulars of the art and science I am appointed here to teach; and I might safely venture to defy such gentlemen to listen to my discourses for so long a time, without having their minds strongly biased both by the methods and the opinions I shall declare and inculcate. They cannot avoid it, even if they would. Is it not then a serious concern, that I should give them a proper bias and not a wrong one?

This Professorship is perhaps the most important concern of my life. As to my private business as a physician, I practise my art among a number of families and individuals of Philadelphia, who are either benefitted or injured by my medical action; and the good that I do, if any, or the evil, if any, is confined to the narrow circle of my business affairs—the good is done here, and the evil ceases here. The sphere is small.

How is it with my relations to you? Those relations bring me into vast communication with every part of the United States. So that if I teach you that I should not; or if I refrain from teaching you that I should, I am guilty of a grievous fault; whether arising from my incompetency, or my indifference; a fault not merely as redounding to your harm, and my own shame, but as enuring to the lasting injury of many of my countrymen in the North and the

South, the East and the West, as well as here at home. But when the sphere of a man's influences is enlarged, how careful should he be as to their nature.

If I should be able to give to your minds so great a bias as I have supposed, and should give it in a wrong direction, the consequences of my errors would enure to the public harm for years; perhaps during the entire life-time of some of my pupils; and certainly, with all of them, until experience, reflection and ripened judgment should come to set them free from the prejudices and misdirection of a pernicious mode of instruction. How many men engaged in different pursuits do we meet with, who are suffering and doing continued evils from bad bringing up to their trades or occupations. Physicians taught in a bad school, are, of all other persons, perhaps, with the greatest difficulty absolved of the bonds of a wretched dogmatism unfounded in the truth of nature.

"Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined."

If it were my duty to stand up here all winter and read extracts to you, taken out of Denman's Midwifery, or to tell you all that Mauriceau said, or what the Sieur de Valognes thought, I should have little responsibility; but such is not my province. I have something else to do besides laying before you a compend of the writings of Henry Wigand, or the Herr Von Siebold, or Dr. Joerg—or to read to you out of the ponderous quartos of David D. Davis, or any other author. I am to be an author for what I shall say to you all this winter.

I have it in hand to tell you that which *I* do know, that which *I* have learned, out of the great volume of nature, that has been lying open before me day and night during many wearisome years. That great book of Phenomena and Laws, is the best instructor; and you, yourselves, after your preliminary toils are ended, will turn its ample pages, and confess, as their light flashes out into conviction, that no book is like that. I must tell you what I have learned

by comparison and judgment of the things I have both seen and read of. I believe I have seen the *whole* of Midwifery; and I think that few men living have received more children just born than I with these two hands of mine. I am a complete *blasé* as to all the forms and accidents of a midwifery practice.

But I beg you not to misapprehend me here, as asserting that a man may learn medicine out of the Book of Nature alone. Mr. Thompson—the father of all the botanical tribe—tried to learn it out of the Book of Nature, but she was printed in Hebrew—Greek to him, and so he ended his theory and research with No. 6, which I believe consists in some infernal compound of red pepper, &c. Dr. Hahnneman did not open nature's volume; but he looked into the fathomless abysses of his own brain, and there he found, and only there, an idea of some new principle different from the Life Force. This principle, which does not exist; and the modifiers of that principle which would not modify it if it did exist, conclude his discoveries in the art of curing; and that is the way with all those who attempt to study physic out of their own resources. Gentlemen, no man can study medicine by himself. He must have help; and that help comes from books. I never could have learned why I ought to do thus and so, to keep a lady patient from bleeding to death, or from perishing with convulsions, out of my own primary independent observation and reflection. If I have done so, I thank the fathers, and I thank every good man—whether Greek or Roman, whether Arabian or European—who in ages past has put upon the record the things that have been observed in medicine; and if I know those things, I owe that knowledge to them; I could never have learned it of myself. Therefore, I love books. I think there is no good physician without their aid—nor can be none. Instead of disparaging books and authors, I would rather glorify and honour them, when meritorious. I would rather be the author of Thos. Schwann's Researches on the Comparative Structure and Growth of Ani-

mals and Plants, than have gained the peerless victories of Resaca de la Palma and Monterey. I think that nations should build monuments to any one of their citizens who can say with Flaccus—xxx. ode, B. iii.—

"Exegi monumentum ære perneumius,
Regalique situ Pyramidum altius:
Quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens
Possit diruere aut innumeralibis
Annorum series et fuga temporum."

Such monuments come at last to be the nation; for what are Greece and Rome now, save the historians, orators, poets and philosophers, whose works remain to tell us of the people who are forever passed away, but whose name and renown are at last come to this conclusion.

Medicine is a subject too vast for one man to learn it alone. It is too high and complicate, and too mysterious. Tens of thousands of the very best order of minds, directed solely to medical inquiries and observations, have not been able, from the dating of the Cnidian sentences until now, to complete and perfect the medical study, though that study has been aided and promoted esoterically by the whole people, of every age and nation, who by accident, by design, or by the force of genius, have raised up the science from nothing—from the first exercises of human intelligence to the great height at which it now stands—among all the polished nations of the world. What an innumerable series of years, what a long flight of time, was required to gather up all the items, all the integers of the information and resources of mankind on the subject of health and disease! Most of the valuable information on these subjects is what is contained in *our books*, some of which were written 2500 years ago; and the stock has been annually increased and annually recorded ever since. I repeat, then, that I do not despise medical learning, but rather I deplore my little proficiency in such noble attainments; and should most thankfully receive the skill or the power that I could apply to your propulsion in that very direction. But nevertheless—and notwithstanding what I have now said—I design in my course of lectures to teach you myself, laying before you those things which the fathers

and the brethren by their good works and labours of love in times past have enabled me properly to see and to understand, reading them myself out of the great Roll of Nature, after they had taught me the way.

You are come here to acquire a part of your medical education, and you know that the information a man obtains in this world, comes into his mind through a thousand diversified sources—observation, reflection, comparison, judgment, reading, conversation—until at last the man is educated and fit to set up by himself, and to think and act and speak for himself. An educated man is one liberalized—or as Seneca says—"made a free man." He indeed asserts that liberal studies, only, can make a man truly *free*, as raising him above the dominion of prejudice and superstition, and even above the power of Fortune itself. In this he agrees with Tully, who heads his fifth paradox with the words, οτι παντες οι ζωφοι ελευθεροι και παντες οι μωροι δουλοι—all wise men are freemen, and all fools are slaves.

Instead of staying at home all this winter to read books in your offices, you are come hither to read *your professors' minds*, who are, for you, *authors*. Then it behoves us to let you lead *us*, not another. Therefore I am about to teach you, as I said, that which I do know, and in this reading of professors' minds, there is a great advantage. 1. There is a great variety of studies, all tending to one point—your advancement in medical knowledge. 2. These lectures are oral; they are like conversations, and possess a freshness and vigour of relation and clearness of explanation that can not be put down in any book. All of you know this who have ever been at the theatre to see a pantomime, or who have attended a scenic representation in a foreign and unknown language. In either case, the action, gesture and physiognomical expression of the players, make you very fully acquainted as to the intentions or wishes, or story of the performers; but in a medical lecture, there is the voice, the eye, the whole countenance and figure of the lecturer before you; and if there be any fire of

zeal or life in him, he must enkindle the same flame in your own hearts—for enthusiasm is contagious. No, there is no way to let a man know what you think or intend, like telling him it, *viva voce.* Then, besides, there are specimens, demonstrations, models, drawings and action, in full sight of all the class. A man must be very stupid that can sit here a whole winter and not learn ten times as much as he could learn at home in five or even ten winters. So as to midwifery; you are to read me this winter. The more books you read beside, the better. But it is not worth your while to travel a thousand miles to hear me read Mons. Velpeau or Robert Lee, Dr. James Blundell or Wm. P. Dewees. If you read other books, it is well; you will sit as critics on my discourses.

I beg you not to suppose that my duty is confined to demonstrations of labours, and such matters alone. My chair is set over a very large field of medical researches. It may be that I am an enthusiast in my particular pursuits. Be it so. Still there is no denying the fact that midwifery is, as a business, one of the most difficult and delicate of human avocations, arising from the undeniable gravity and importance of the morbid affections that are indissolubly connected with the purely obstetrical range of business, and the great extent of its complications in every branch of medicine and surgery.

Such a practitioner ought to know all, and more, and better, too, than the physician knows, since he is bound to treat in his practice every variety and form of pathological conditions. His patients in gestation, in labour, in the lying-in-state, cannot be taken out of his hand to be placed under the care of a wiser and more experienced man. Moreover, so sudden, so great, so urgent are the therapeutical wants of his patients, so obscure the signs of approaching disease, in many cases, that the obstetrician ought to know how to detect them whenever so remote, and to cure them whenever so flagrant. Therefore he ought to have all the eyes of Argus open in his mind.

Again, as the accoucheur, he inevitably becomes the confidential adviser in all the sexual diseases, which are by fa the most numerous class of those that affect women; and as minister of Juno Lucina, he takes charge of the health of the whole rising generation, besides *all* the young ladies. See then, what a practice the young man has got already!! I should think you would all study midwifery.

Look here, young gentlemen! Half mankind are males and the other half females. Why females? Why were they not all men like yourselves? They would have been far better off if they had been. But why not *all* males? Because there was a necessity for reproduction of the human form and faculties, as there is of all other organic forms and faculties. A genus is of all things the most indestructible. It dies and lives by a succession of generations as long as the world endures. You are the same sort of young men that used to ride about the streets of Ancient Thebes, or that galloped over the plains of Marathon, or that conquered the world under the consuls of Rome; and the issue of your loins shall be walking about the earth perhaps tens of thousands of years hence; and they will resemble their fathers, as you resemble your progenitors. And it must have been so; else the world would be desolate. But for this amazing power of reproduction by germs, the whole scene of animated nature would come to an end, and not one beating heart, not one trembling leaf, not one fragrant blossom, would be left to show forth the goodness and acknowledge the power and the wisdom of the Divine Author of nature. We are not physically immortal in our bodies, but we are physically immortal in our offspring. Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei vitabit Libitinam."

You see, then, that there was a great necessity to keep the present dispensation on foot to keep it in action until the last end shall come. Hence the necessity for a sex, both in the vegetable and animal kingdoms.

But this great dispensation was not likely to depend on a force not so strong as the spider's most attenuated thread.

Nay, it should and does hang upon a chain of adamant, that binds the first and the last generations so firmly together as to render a race or genus, as a species, an immortal imperishable *unit*, of which one side touches the beginning and the other touches the end of time.

Well, this is one of the forces you are about to study—to learn its laws and phenomena; its modifiers; whatever may help to preserve it, and whatever may be done to obviate the causes of its destruction or nullification. It is an immense force. It is the dominant of the Life Forces. For the conservation of the genera, it stands in the place which the law of gravitation occupies as to the maternal universe. The creature is incomplete until this force be fully established, and her nature is changed to a ruin after it ceases to control her life. You will never know the nature of the sex until you have studied this profoundly impressed law of the animal œconomy. You will never be a physician until you learn it. You might become a quack doctor or a homœopath, but you will never be a physician else.

Said I not truly then, when I said I have no easy task to perform? and that the contemplation of it ought to fill me with solicitude, lest I fail to instruct you well in this difficult and highest branch of medical practice? Do not many men follow it for twenty years, and yet never learn it?

"Kennen wir jetzt keine Geburtshelfer mehr, die, wo sie hingerufen werden, keine audere Indication zu machen im Stande sind, als augenblichlich mit zange oder Faust über den unschuldigen uterus herzufallen, und ihn, wie einen Dieb und Spitzbuben, der das kind gestohlen hat zu mishandelu?"—*Wigand die Geburt des Menschen.* p. 12.

But I must teach it to you in two courses of lectures. Well, if you will give me a due share of your attention, I will do it—I will do it to the best of my ability. I will undertake to give you sound philosophical and practical notions on the nature of the sex and their diseases; upon the laws and phenomena of embryogeny and developement—a study, in my estimation, more profound than that

of astronomy itself; on gestation, its signs, laws, diseases, accidents and conduct; on labours in every variety; on the lying-in state, and its diseases and treatment; on the young child, and its diseases, and the mode of treating them. I shall cheerfully assume this task, upon the condition that you concur and co-operate with me, by giving heed to what I say, and what I exhibit before you. I call upon you to help me; for we have a great work to do—let us do it well.

Independently of the pecuniary and profitable views that may have led some of you to undertake the study of medicine, there are motives of a higher cast and more noble stamp, that doubtless actuate many, and that should excite the desires of all to excel. Allow me to set forth one principal one out of many. I mean the wish to be respectable in the world, and at the same time be the minister of great good to a great number of persons.

Unquestionably a wise, sagacious, upright and honourable physician is a useful man in society. Unquestionably there is in the world a very great amount of useful knowledge on the subject of health, its conservation, restoration and improvement. There are some ignorant or unreflecting persons who at times—not at all times—entertain doubts as to the value and utility of medicine; doubts arising out of its supposed uncertainty, and the differences of opinion among physicians.

In my own mind, after near forty years of study, and a large experience, there remains not one lingering doubt or misgiving as to the immense value to mankind of all that class of information comprised in the denomination of the Medical Sciences. Many of you have probably read or heard of the recent publication of my worthy friend, Dr. Forbes, of London, in which he calls in question, not the value of the medical sciences, but finds, very justly, great fault with the method of studying and executing the duties of the physician. Dr. Forbes himself, is an eminent and a most enthusiastic supporter of medical learning, and has

written the work in question with a view to excite the profession to a stricter self-examination, and a greater care in in applying the ministry of the science to the treatment of diseases. I believe his work has already commenced a very great improvement in the art. If you should read it carelessly, you might admit doubts as to the dignity, beneficence and stability of our science, or the elevated nature of its ministry, and your ardour in its pursuit and your success would inevitably be lessened or defeated. If you enter upon our paths without zeal, and walk in them doubting—you will never be happy—nor never useful.

Let us look upon this point for a moment, in a plain common sense view of it.

Every living creature is liable to derangement of its vital action, and every such creature sooner or later ceases to exist, in consequence of the failure or alteration of its physical construction. But, derangements of the health are accompanied with inconvenience; with incapacity; with pain; and many of them lead to inevitable premature death, if left to the powers of nature alone. The records of history show this to be true, both as to man and other animals. Those records contain accounts of numerous epidemic and epizootic maladies, in the remotest as well as most modern times.

But these inconveniences—incapacity, pain, and danger of death—are among the greatest of evils to which we are exposed, and they are *so great*, that men would early seek to avoid or counteract them by methods, whether empirical or rational,—and it would not be among the last of the acquisitions of the human mind, to find some remedy, true or false, for a pain, or a disease, or an incapacity as to the health.

The earth has been inhabited about 6000 years, during all which period, men have wanted the aids of medicine, and found them too—whether good or bad. It is now a very long time since the earth was so populous in certain regions, as to have admitted of the building of large cities

and towns, the ruins of which still exist to attest their ancient vast extent and grandeur.

The populousness of the city of Thebes with her hundred gates, is proverbial. The great commercial emporium, Alexandria, was of immense extent and populousness; and Rome the mistress of the world, is asserted to have contained in the days of Trajan 5,000,000 of souls, which exceeds by 3,000,000 the present population of London, the largest city in the world.

But there were great numbers of large and luxurious cities in those days, and there was a great extent of territory made rich and brilliant with the productions of a wise and industrious husbandry. I think it probable that the most boasted scenery of England or Belgium, would not now be deemed to excel the landscapes that met the eye of the ancient traveller in the Campania Felix,—as it was described by Pliny in the third book of his natural history. And as to the public weal—the happiness, comfort, and security of the people, hear what Mr. Gibbon the historian has to say:

"If a man were called to fix the period of the history of the world, in which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would without hesitation name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus, in which the whole enormous extent of the Roman Empire was governed by absolute power, tempered by wisdom and justice."

All history concurs to establish the fact, that in those old times of the world there was a most rich, elegant, and luxurious civilization. Is that true? If it is, then it follows that such a civilization implies immense acquisitions in many departments of knowledge, and the possession of all the means of carrying that civilization to so eminent a height.

Octavius boasted that he, having found Rome a city of bricks, left it, after his reign of 40 years, a city of marble. There was a continuous street from Ottricoli to the mouth

of the Tiber, a distance of 40 miles. The Temples, Palaces, Forums, Amphitheatres, Naumachia, Hippodromes, Columns, Arches, Bridges, and other public structures, were noble beyond what is now seen. And there were exposed in the public places, squares, corners, in the streets, and everywhere—so many statues, that the government was compelled to deny the further privilege of placing them, except upon certain conditions. More than 200,000 of them were accumulated there at one time,—a number nearly equal to the population of this great city where we now live!

I say these are proofs of a vast amount of knowledge owned by those people 1800 years ago. But those people, like all that had gone before them of the Egyptian, Assyrian, and Macedonian Empires, were subject to a thousand surgical diseases and accidents, and to innumerable maladies; and all of them to the inevitable decay and death that awaits upon all the living. They had very nearly the same maladies that spring up daily among a crowded population now.

At that time they had a very enlightened and liberal philosophy. Socrates had already spoken his words of wisdom, and Plato had recorded them. Aristotle had written his wonderful works of natural history and metaphysics. Hippocrates had long before published his immortal treatises. The poems of Hesiod, and of Horace, and Virgil—the orators—the philosophic writings of Cicero, and a thousand and a thousand evidences of the liberal education of that day are in every man's hands.

Medicine was then, as it hath ever since been—a liberal study—a high philosophy; and we know that physicians were numerous and necessary as they are even now. Nor was there wanting among them many a man of genius and power.

But when we read the Homeric accounts of the medical men illustrious in the Iliad—when we peruse the polished

sentences of Cornelius Celsus, or imagine the medical opinions and acts of Asclepiades, of Musa or Themison,—or when we admire the eloquent pages of the Pergamenian, whose fame is as far-spread as Alexander's, and imperishable as Napoleon's—or when we turn over the leaves of Trotula, or Cleopatra, or Cassius Medicus, or Aretæus, or Aeginetta—we may feel surprised that the world had already learned so much.

Yet we must also see that the sanitary interests of that great population were committed to the hands of men who lived before Harvey demonstrated the circulation of the blood—before Pecquet had detected the lacteal, or Rudbeck and Aselli the lymphatic absorptions; in days when Glisson, and Whytt, and Porterfield, and Haller, had not discussed the philosophy of sensibility and contractility of living tissues,—when Paré had not applied his ligature, nor Petit affixed his tourniquet, nor Chamberlen imagined his most conservative of inventions. Only think that since those days navigation has been perfected, and the remotest nations been brought to know each other by the medium of commerce—that America has yielded her drugs, and Ceylon her spices—and the chemist has lighted his lamp, and the optician has perfected his lenses; and a more thorough drill of the human mind has enabled man absolutely to rush forwards in the career of discovery and improvement. For thousands and tens of thousands of minds, of the very best order of intelligence, have been engaged, as it were, with one concentrated energy of reason and perception, to elucidate all that is dark and difficult, and abstruse, but cognoscible of the nature and modifiers of the Life Force in man.

Is this nothing? Is all this power, this divine power of mind, lost and wasted, and utterly useless and profitless!

In the arts, in agriculture, in the sciences, mankind cannot but make perpetual additions to the store of information, save when some great moral cataclysm, following in the train of cruel wars and ages of tyranny and oppression,

comes to overwhelm society in a chaos and night of darkness, like that of the middle ages; and even then the immortal energies of the mind cause it to spring up as by a rebound from the fall. I say, and it is consistent with reason and common sense to say it, that in such a long perpetual progress of the race, they must have gained among other arts, other skill, other science and other knowledge, a vast amount of most useful information upon the management of health, upon the means of restoring it when disordered, and upon the art of invigorating it by methods, whether Hygieinical, or Therapeutical, or Surgical. 6000 years of Traditions! 2500 years of Records! The collections must have been immense indeed! They were immense. Every domestic remedy, every household method of cure, every scientific declaration and demonstration of structure, or function, or treatment—all medical information in the cabin or the palace, in the farm or the college, in the Medicine Lodge of the Sioux, or the boundless wards of St. Louis, or Guy, or St. John's; all this information, *quicquid verritur;* whatsoever has been swept up from the threshing floor of the world and of time, that is medicine—that is what you seek; that is in the province and bounds of the physician—and you are bound to get it, and own it, and use it. Is that nothing! 6000 years! 2500 years of studies! Records! Books!

You may reflect that a vast amount of instruction as to sickness and health, belongs to the public and the world at large—but that same information is also ours. Much of that information is imperfect, inaccurate, and inefficient for serious occasions—yet of what great account for the public happiness and welfare.

But of all this information, as well as of that which is higher, more scientific, more dependible, we are the conservators.

Men in general know how to build houses, to construct boats, bridges, &c.,—but the carpenter, the naval constructor, and the engineer, are better acquainted with those arts than

the public at large. The knowledge possessed by those artisans is a part of the acquisitions made by mankind since the origin of society, and in the same sense our avocation, our profession, places us at the head—as the conservators and administrators of all sanitary knowledge.

Allow me to test your sense of the value of all medical education by setting before you the following proposition.

Let us suppose that it might please God to blot out from the human mind at this instant every item of the medical knowledge which that great mass of intelligence has acquired from the creation till now. I say every item—vulgar or professional, leaving society in all other respects upon its present basis!

What a number of small comforts would at once be missing!

What helpless creatures in the next fractures or dislocations—what terror at the sight of gaping wounds and the blood of madly wild hemorrhages! What affright in convulsions, or palsy! What confusion in epidemics, in fevers! What incapacity in labours! What hopeless and ceaseless blindness! What uncured diseases—what sudden and premature death!

I am perfectly free to declare that I think the loss of the mariner's compass, the quadrant or the steam engine, would be a much less deplorable event in the history of man, than such a loss as that I have supposed!

Is this great, this invaluable philosophy, this consummate, this daily used art to be sneered at! mocked by the ribald and fool! or is the possession of it to be held a passport to the respect, the confidence and gratitude of the world?

What is it then, this great thing?—It is medicine. Is it Homœopathy?—It is medicine. Is it Hydropathy? It is medicine. Is it the art of the nostrum-monger, the quack and the charlatan? It is a medical philosophy of the highest scale—it is learning of the amplest scope. It is an art of the most indispensable necessity for man.

It is that style and armature of the mind and soul that caused the sage of Cos to exclaim :

ιητρος γαρ φιλοσοφος ισωθεος.

A philosophical physician is the same as a god.

Away then, young gentlemen ! away with all doubts as to the great dignity and value of the pursuits in which you here engage !

You know full well, that if all medical science and art could be blotted out, nullified and erased from the tablets of the mind, and there should be a pretended restoration in the nature of a Homœopathy, or Wasserkur, or a Traubenkur or any other idleness or wickedness of the sort, the world would reject it with scorn, and the world would begin again the long toil of seeking out from beneath the whole canopy of heaven its remedies and the art of using them.

The world is too wise in the main not to appreciate the differences of things; and when it looks upon a field waving with yellow grain, it knows that that is for its food; and it equally knows that when the Beneficent Ruler planted the poppy, he ordained its juices to counteract some of the moral ills that are inseparably allied to the physical organization of his children. Yea, he has implanted in the very instincts of his dumb creatures the skill to choose and use certain remedies for their diseases. Medicines are not accidents. God made them, and He alone could make them and give them to us; and what a boon to the sick and the suffering, and to them that stand by and witness their power and their efficacy ! It is a daily scene in all cities, towns and country places. Why should I paint it ?

I acknowledge that I am an enthusiastic admirer of my profession. My speech shows it, and my whole past life is a perpetual proof of it. But I love that profession as a ministry, not as a trade. Can any human avocation have a stronger tendency to elevate and purify the mind, than that of the physician ? What other ? In what other light shall he see the nature of man so clearly and so plainly ?

If you compare the tendency of those pursuits to raise the

mind and the heart above the common level of humanity, with the similar tendencies of mathematics or pure physics, or the study of moral science, we find that they alike lift the contemplations to the throne and glory of God; that they alike show forth the littleness, vileness and fruitlessness of man, his scope and endeavour. The mathematician and the astronomer in their investigations of the theory of the universe in their detection of the laws of planetary and stellar motions, and in the farthest reaches of their thought as to the great cosmic influences and reactions discovered by reason's glance, by the power of numbers, or the magic of their glasses, cannot come nearer to a view of the power and wisdom and goodness of the Most High, than we in our studies of the laws and phenomena of the *Life Force* and of mind. Indeed, I should think not so near, nor so glorious, are their views as ours in the contemplation even of a developing independent cell. Life Force is something spiritual, immortal, invisible; and in so far, above, beyond, higher and more noble than any mere material thing. Studies of the intellectual and moral nature of man are of the medical sciences, and not fairly separable from them. Medicine teaches not only the anatomical and pathological, but the conscious nature of man; his reason, his *Free will*, his judgment. It contemplates all the faculties that render him an imperishable, immortal creature.

Now these appear to me to be considerations, which, as they relate to life—to the spiritual essence of life, both in the healthy and the diseased body—bring us into a closer contemplation of and familiarity with the Divine nature. How can it be that the human intelligence, fully imbued with the knowledge of life in all its forms of existence, should not also know God, the author of life, who is life itself; and knowing and contemplating him, like some image reflected from a vast polished mirror, assume a moral likeness of him—of whom, indeed, the world and the whole universe is, as it were, but one grand reflection or spectrum.

I desire not, young gentlemen, that you should deem me

to take a fantastic and an impracticable view of the nature and tendencies of our medical philosophy; that I range among the clouds and come not down to the common places of our ministry. Few men know better than I do that we must descend to the common level of human affairs; but let us rise as high as Heaven, that we come down again pure as angels, if that were possible! Let us regard our calling as supernal in its moral aspect, though in its administration we must be conversant with drugs and medicines, and instruments, and rigorous exactions, and dietetic and hygieinic ordinances; though we must contend with the sick man's temper, and the sick girl's caprices, and the sick child's waywardness—for our business is a real business, a drudgery and a work. Oh that every student of the College would gird up the loins of his mind, and set his face as a flint to the missionary labour of the physician's life; that he would early learn how difficult and responsible is that office, and only to be fitly discharged by the studious and the learned—so mysterious, so eminently a reasoning art, that no mathematical drill of the mind, no immense comprehension of the whole range of the physical sciences, no elaborate education in moral science, no polyglott attainments in literature, can ever bring the feeble, finite, groping intelligence of man up to the point of comprehending fully what is life, since none knows it save He who is life itself.

In our courses of lectures we all design to lay before you, in the completest manner that we can, the doctrines and the art appertaining to each of the professorships. We can do much, very much towards the furthering of your purposes. Would we could more. The customs of the country have so far forbidden that we should have time to do more than that which we can effect in the course of a session of the College. If you should but reflect upon the shortness of the time allowed to us, you would perhaps perceive the necessity of greater assiduity in making the best possible use of that time. Let not the seductions of the city draw you aside. Take no heed to the flattering voice of pleasure,

that would tempt you from your duty—which is but one—that of preparing yourself now for the career that is before you, in which is set up the glittering prize of that honourable distinction that is awarded to every well-spent life.